



News Release

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Rick Snyder, Governor
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State Fire Marshal Urges Safety at Crowded Public Gatherings| *Brazil Nightclub Fire Offers Life-Saving Reminders*

January 29, 2013. In the aftermath of a nightclub fire that killed 231 people in southern Brazil early Sunday morning, and injured 120, 79 critically, State Fire Marshal Richard Miller today urges citizens to know where exits are, know escape routes and be prepared to react immediately if fire breaks out in crowded, public venues.

"Most people may ignore a fire alarm going off especially when they are having a good time enjoying a concert or event," said Miller. "But when the alarm does go off, your first response must be to leave immediately because if there really is a fire you have only seconds to get out and save your life."

Miller referenced the Rhode Island nightclub fire in 2003 where people had only 90 seconds to get out; 100 people died in that tragedy. Some survivors escaped by breaking out windows, while others found additional doors besides the main entrance.

Tips to help ensure safety at a nightclub or any other public venue:

- Identify all the exits. In most fires, people try to get out the same way they came in. Walk around the club and see where other doors are. Check out exits firsthand and see what kind of doors they have. Dead-bolt doors may make it very difficult to get out. Notify authorities if some doors are blocked by equipment or boxes. If possible, see if a door will stay open or can be propped open.
- Look up for sprinkler heads. If there aren't any, be wary. Sprinkler systems are the best way to avoid disasters but are not always easy to see or identify.
- Avoid events that are jam-packed crowded. If concerned, call the local fire department to check it out -- the fire department will deal with building capacity and fire safety.
- Identify venue staff members and figure out if there are enough of them for the size of the crowd. Venues should have crowd managers, whose jobs are to take care of people in emergencies and help get people out.
- If it appears a show involves indoor fireworks, consider leaving. Indoor pyrotechnics can be done safely but patrons should be wary. In the Brazil fire, the band's pyrotechnic show ignited insulation material.
- Tell everyone in your group which way to go, and remember, most people are going to head for the front door. The danger is that people will fall and get trampled. That's the reason for knowing other ways out. It takes more time to get out of a main entrance because of the mass of people going to that one exit.

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- Do not try to put out a fire. Get out and leave the emergency response to the crowd managers on staff. That applies even if a fire extinguisher is nearby. The staff should be trained to know where those are, and you need to head for an exit.
- If the smoke gets thick, duck down to the clean air. If you can't see, head straight until you get to a wall and then follow it. Keep a hand up to find a window. Break a window out if you have to escape that way. Dropping down could be a tough decision because you don't want to put yourself in peril in the crowd rush.
- Once you are out, go to a prearranged meeting point for your group, like your car or a public transit stop.

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